



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Advisory Circular

**Subject: OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR
AIRPORT TRAFFIC CONTROL
TOWERS (ATCT) THAT ARE NOT
OPERATED BY, OR UNDER
CONTRACT WITH, THE UNITED
STATES (NON-FEDERAL).**

**Date: 7/19/93
Initiated by: ATP-230**

AC No. 90-93

1. PURPOSE.

This advisory circular (AC) recommends government publications and procedures for the operation by, equipment installation at, and maintenance of, record keeping by, accident/incident reporting by, tower specialist training for, and management of a non-Federal ATCT (NFCT).

2. CANCELLATION.

AC 90-81, Procedures for Obtaining Publications—Civil Non-FAA Operated Control Towers, dated November 9, 1983, is cancelled.

3. REFERENCES.

The following references contain information applicable to non-Federal ATCT operations.

- a. Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR), Parts 65, 91, 121, and 171.
- b. Airman's Information Manual (AIM).

4. DEFINITIONS.

a. **ADMINISTRATOR** – The Federal Aviation Administrator or any person to whom the Administrator has delegated authority in the matter concerned.

b. **NON-FEDERAL ATCT (NFCT)** – An ATCT tower operated by an entity other than the United States Government, excluding Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) contract towers, providing air traffic control (ATC) services to aircraft operating to, from, on, or in the vicinity of an airport where the tower is located.

c. **AIR TRAFFIC MANAGER (ATM)** – A person who is responsible for the day-to-day operation of an ATC facility.

d. **DIRECTIVE** – Any order, notice, change or supplement used by the FAA or ATM to specify policies, guidance, or procedures dealing with ATC

operations, training, equipment, and management of an ATCT.

e. **AIR TRAFFIC DIVISION MANAGER** – A person who has the overall responsibility for the safe, orderly and expeditious flow of air traffic within the FAA geographic region or any person to whom that responsibility has been delegated.

f. **AIRWAY FACILITIES DIVISION MANAGER** – A person who has the overall responsibility for the implementation of the region's airway facilities expansion and modernization program and maintenance of the National Airspace System (NAS) facilities within the FAA geographic region or any person to whom that responsibility has been delegated.

g. **NFCT VENDOR** – The commercial operator from whom ATC services are contracted.

5. BACKGROUND AND SCOPE.

a. In the interest of promoting aviation safety, the FAA through its Advisory Circulars and other publications disseminates good operating practices, policy, guidelines, and procedures to assist in the management of services provided to users of the NAS. An example of one of these policy publications are the Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) that specify minimum standards for proficiency, conduct, experience, skills, and ratings.

b. Specifically, Part 65 of the FAR details requirements for issuing certificates and associated rating and general operating rules for Airmen other than Flight crewmembers. Additionally, the FAA has internal directives detailing the methodology used by Federal facilities (FAA-contract ATCTs and Department of Defense (DoD) facilities) to establish and manage ATCT's, certify FAA employees as control tower operators, maintain controller pro-

iciency, and determine the quality of services provided.

c. However, there are facilities that do not fall under the realm of the Federal Government. These private entities have contracts with state and local governments to provide ATC services. These ATCT's are called non-Federal ATCT's. No Federal statutes or regulations prescribe uniform or consistent procedures and criteria for the establishment and management of these ATCT's and the provision of ATC services, nor is there any requirement for FAA oversight. The procedures recommended herein are designed for these NFCT owners, NFCT vendors, and NFCT ATM's.

d. The FAA believes that voluntary observance of the recommended procedures detailed in this AC will improve the services and aid those NFCT owners, vendors, operators, and facility managers in maintaining the high level of safety enjoyed by Federally operated ATC facilities in the NAS.

6. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NFCT ATM.

The FAA recommends that the NFCT ATM endeavor to fulfill the following responsibilities:

a. Maintain familiarity with the positions, equipment, and duties required to operate an ATCT.

b. Ensure operational continuity during the transfer of position responsibility.

c. Issue pertinent airmen's/weather information (i.e. SIGMETS, NOTAMS, etc.).

d. Maintain training records for each ATC specialist in the facility.

e. Ensure that ATC services are provided in a safe, orderly and efficient manner.

f. Ensure that each ATC specialist in the NFCT manager's employ is properly qualified and current in the application of ATC services.

g. Maintain an aggressive pilot education program that includes pilot/controller forums to discuss/clarify local procedures and airspace matters.

h. Ensure that voice recorders and other essential equipment are checked for suitable operation at the beginning of each shift.

i. Ensure that, excluding tapes containing information pertaining to accidents/incidents, voice recorder tapes are retained for a minimum of 15 days. Tapes pertinent to accidents and incidents should be retained as detailed in FAA Order 8020.11.

7. EMERGENCY OPERATIONS AND HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS.

a. To ensure that emergency operations (for example accidents/incidents) data are documented, it is essential for non-Federal ATMs to record and report all accidents/incidents in the same manner as would FAA-operated ATCT's (in accordance with FAA Order 8020.11). The purpose of such reports and records is to provide essential information for follow-on investigations and help in the development of new procedures and regulations.

b. The ATM or a designated representative upon becoming aware of conditions that are hazardous to a safe operation, should restrict or suspend operations as necessary until the necessary corrections are made.

8. OPERATIONAL AND PROCEDURAL STANDARDS.

a. Using the FAA handbooks, manuals, and directives listed in this AC as a guide, the NFCT vendor/ATM should develop a series of directives on operations and procedures for the subject tower. The procedures should specify the following:

(1) Standard operational position procedures, position binders, and position relief briefings.

(2) Procedures for training and supervising air traffic controllers.

(3) Procedures for handling accidents/incidents.

(4) Procedures for records management.

(5) Procedures for providing responses to facility evaluations conducted by the Office of Air Traffic System Effectiveness.

(6) Procedures for the installation, maintenance, and repair of electronic and weather equipment.

b. The NFCT vendor/ATM should forward an information copy of the directives and procedures listed under this section, and any amendments, to the regional Air Traffic Division Manager.

c. The NFCT vendor/ATM should ensure that each employee complies with the operational standards and procedures, as well as any applicable FAR, and provide all specialists with current operational standards.

d. Each NFCT vendor/ATM, before establishing or changing the location of any business office, except a temporary change, should notify the regional Air Traffic Division Manager of the change in writing.

e. Each NFCT vendor/ATM should notify the regional Air Traffic Division Manager at least

24 hours before termination of any advertised ATC service.

f. The NFCT vendor/ATM should:

(1) Ensure that each supervisor is qualified and current and holds a Control Tower Operator (CTO) certificate issued under Part 65 of the FAR.

(2) Ensure that each employee directly involved in ATCT equipment maintenance has a minimum of a Federal Communications Commission certificate and can show to the Airway Facilities Division Manager the ability to install successfully, and perform repair work or maintain, and verify operation of such equipment.

(3) Develop and manage a "substance abuse" program that meets the requirements of Parts 65 and 121 of the FAR.

g. The NFCT Vendor/ATM should maintain the following information on all facility personnel holding a CTO certificate:

(1) Each person's full name and the date of issuance of a CTO certificate for the facility and the certificate number.

(2) The amount and currency of experience in sufficient detail to determine the individual's qualifications.

(3) The individual's current duties and the date of the assignment to those duties.

(4) The effective date and class of medical certificate that the individual holds.

(5) The date of certification and required recurrent proficiency checks.

(6) Any action taken regarding any specialist's release or temporary suspension from employment for physical or professional disqualification.

(7) The date of the completion of any training associated with performing CTO duties.

9. FACILITY DIRECTIVES, REPORTS, AND FORMS.

a. Each ATM should make available to each employee the most current edition of the following directives or publications. (Information on how to get these recommended FAA documents is available by writing for free copies of the "Guide to Federal Aviation Administration Publications." FAA-APA-PG-13 may be ordered from: U.S. Department of Transportation, M-443.2, Washington, D.C. 20590.) For Aeronautical Charts and Related Publications Price List, write to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Distribution Branch,

N/CG33, National Ocean Service, Riverdale, Maryland 20737-1199.

(1) FAA Order 1320.1, FAA Directives System.

(2) FAA Order 1350.15, Records Organization, Transfer, and Destruction Standards.

(3) FAA Order 3120.4, Air Traffic Control Training.

(4) FAA Order 6700.20, Non-Federal Navigational Aids and Air Traffic Control Facilities

(5) FAA Order 7010.1, Air Traffic Evaluations.

(6) FAA Order 7110.65, Air Traffic Control Handbook.

(7) FAA Order 7210.3, Facility Operation and Administration.

(8) FAA Order 7210.42, Air Traffic Control Personnel Sign On/Off Process.

(9) FAA Order 7220.1, Certification and Rating Procedures.

(10) FAA Order 7340.1, Contractions.

(11) FAA Order 7350.6, Location Identifiers.

(12) FAA Order 7610.4, Special Military Operations.

(13) FAA Order 7930.2, Notices to Airmen (NOTAM) Handbook.

(14) FAA Order 8020.11, Aircraft Accident and Incident Notification, Investigation, and Reporting.

(15) FAA Order 8260.3, U.S. Standard for Terminal Procedures.

(16) Airman's Information Manual.

(17) Airport/Facility Directory.

(18) Terminal Procedures Publications.

(19) IFR Enroute Low/High Altitude charts.

(20) Code of Federal Regulations, Title 14, Federal Aviation Regulations Parts 1, 65, 67, 71, 73, 91, 93, 99, 101, 103, 105, 171, 189; and Appendix I, Part 121.

(21) Sectional charts covering at least the area within a 50 mile radius of the ATCT.

(22) National Air Traffic Training Program Terminal Refresher, VFR Tower, TR-1 thru TR-14.

(23) Terminal Instructional Program Guide (IPG), TP 12-0-1.

(24) Terminal Self Study, Phase VI, 55026, Flight Data all units.

(25) Terminal Self Study, Phase VII, 55027, Clearance Delivery all units.

(26) Terminal Self Study, Phase VIII, 55028, Ground Control all units.

(27) Terminal Self Study, Phase IX, 55029, Local Control all units.

(28) FAA Form 7210-2, Preliminary Operational Error/Deviation Report.

(29) FAA Form 7210-3, Final Operational Error/Deviation Report.

(30) FAA Form 7230-4, Daily Record of Facility Ops/Personnel Log.

(31) FAA Form 7230-7.2, Flight Strips-FDEP, or FAA Form 7230-8, Flight Strips single cut (if manually prepared).

(32) FAA Form 7230-10, Position Log.

(33) FAA Form 8020-9, Aircraft Accident/Incident Preliminary Notice.

(34) FAA Form 8020-11, Incident Report.

(35) FAA Form 8020-17, Preliminary Pilot Deviation.

(36) FAA Form 8020-19, Reclassification of Aviation Incident Report.

(37) FAA Form 8020-21, Preliminary Near Midair Collision Report.

(38) Appropriate National Weather Service publications.

(39) An operations manual and log for each piece of equipment required in the ATCT.

(40) Copies of all current Letters of Agreements.

10. FACILITY EQUIPMENT.

a. Each NFCT vendor should equip the ATCT with the following as a minimum:

(1) Operable two-way radio equipment with a backup power source, consisting of a minimum of one transmitter and receiver for each frequency published.

(2) One operable backup two-way multi-channel transmitter and receiver with a reliable backup power source.

(3) Wind indicator system certified by either the FAA or the National Weather Service (NWS).

(4) At least two aneroid altimeter setting indicators (ASI) or one ASI and a mercurial barometer.

Note.—A digital ASI (DASI) system is considered as one aneroid ASI instrument.

(5) Visibility charts, prepared and maintained by the ATM, in conjunction with the NWS, where an ATCT takes weather observations.

(6) A voice recorder system that, during the period the ATCT is in operation, continually records the synchronized time with the recording of each radio frequency and interphone line used for receiving/transmitting ATC clearances, or instructions.

(7) A minimum of one signal light gun, with a reliable back-up power source.

(8) Accurate facility drawings of the wiring and layout of the equipment.

(9) Two sets of 7 x 50 power binoculars.

(10) An airfield lighting control panel, if applicable.

(11) A telephone/interphone system to communicate with the parent Approach Control Facility/Air Route Traffic Control Center.

b. Each NFCT vendor/ATM should advise, in writing, the regional Airway Facilities Division Manager/Air Traffic Division Manager of alterations to any equipment recommended in this AC.

c. Each NFCT vendor/ATM should ensure that radio frequencies supporting aviation services are applied for and managed according to the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 47—Telecommunications, Part 87.

11. MONITORING OF FACILITY APPLICATION OF RECOMMENDED PROCEDURES.

The NFCT's application of the recommended procedures contained in this Circular will be periodically reviewed by the Office of Air Traffic System Effectiveness according to procedures outlined in FAA Order 7010.1, to assist in voluntary compliance with the recommendations in the interest of promoting aviation safety.

Harold W Becker

Harold W. Becker

Acting Director, Air Traffic

Rules and Procedures Service

U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

800 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20591

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